

**SOLOMON'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
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*"Solomon's Evangelical Lutheran Church, following the example of Jesus Christ, seeks to live in the confidence and fullness of God's grace; to preach the Good News boldly and truthfully; to support and serve others in faith; to work in harmony with all creation."*

**SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**  
Service of Thanksgiving for the US Semiquincentennial  
**JULY 5, 2026**

**July 5, 2026**  
Sixth Sunday after Pentecost  
Service of Thanksgiving for the US Semiquincentennial

*The mystery of God's ways is sometimes hidden from the wise and intelligent. The prophet describes an everlasting realm that contrasts with earthly nations, one marked by peace, humility, and freedom. Jesus associates with those excluded from the religious community. Like Paul, we struggle with selfish desires; we lament flawed systems; and we seek God's mercy and forgiveness. We gather around word, water, and meal by Christ's invitation: "Come to me, all you that are weary." Here we find rest for our souls and hope for life in beloved community.*

**GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**ORGAN PRELUDE** *Prayer for the Nation* - Lani Smith

**LIGHTING OF THE ALTAR CANDLES**

**\*CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God,  
source of hope in every nation,  
rest for the weary,  
glory and peace to the ends of the earth.  
**Amen.**

Let us bring every burden to God.  
*Silence is kept for reflection.*

God of all mercy,  
**we have sinned against you,  
our neighbors, and your creation.**  
**Within ourselves and our communities,  
our desire to do what is good  
is at war with the evil that dwells in us.**  
**We lament the evil that holds us captive.**  
**We repent of the evil we have done,  
and the evil done on our behalf.**  
**Rescue us, forgive us, and restore us  
for lives of compassion and courage  
through our Savior Jesus Christ.**  
**Amen.**

All-merciful, Almighty God  
forgive you all your sins  
through the grace of † Jesus Christ,  
and by the Spirit's power  
strengthen you in doing what is good.  
**Amen.**

**\*GATHERING SONG *Before You, Lord, We Bow* (ELW 893)**



1 Be - fore you, Lord, we bow, our God who reigns a - bove and  
2 May ev - 'ry moun - tain height, each vale and for - est green, shine  
3 Earth, hear your mak - er's voice; your great re - deem - er own; be -  
4 And when in pow'r he comes, oh, may then ev - 'ry land from



rules the world be - low with bound-less pow'r and love. Our thanks we  
forth in wis - dom's light, and its rich fruits be seen! May ev - 'ry  
lieve, o - bey, re - joice, and wor - ship God a - lone. Cast down your  
all its rend - ing tombs send forth a glo - rious band, a count - less



bring in joy and praise, our hearts we raise, to you we sing!  
tongue be tuned to praise and join to raise a grate - ful song.  
pride, your sin de - plore, and bow be - fore the Cru - ci - fied.  
throng, with joy to sing to heav'n's high king sal - va - tion's song!

Text: Francis Scott Key, 1779–1843, alt.  
Music: DARWALL'S 148TH, John Darwall, 1731–1789

**\*GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.  
**And also with you.**

## \*CANTICLE OF PRAISE (ELW 204a)



1 Glo-ry be to God in heav-en; peace, good-will to all the earth.  
2 Glo-ry be to Christ for - ev - er, Lamb of God and Lord of love.  
3 Ho - ly One we now ac-claim you; Lord a - lone, to you we call;



Might-y God of all cre - a - tion, Fa - ther of sur - pass - ing worth:  
Son of God and gra - cious Sav - ior, you have come from heav'n a - bove;  
Ho - ly One in faith we name you, God most high, yet near to all:



we ex - alt you, we a - dore you, we lift high our thanks and praise.  
on the cross you died to save us; now you reign at God's right hand.  
Je - sus Christ, with God the Spir - it, in the Fa - ther's splen - dor bright.



Saints and an - gels bow be - fore you; here on earth our songs we raise.  
Hear our prayer; re - store, for - give us; in your prom - ise firm we stand.  
For the peace that we in - her - it, glo - ry be to God on high!

## \*PRAYER OF THE DAY

Lord of all the worlds, guide this nation by your Spirit to go forward in justice and freedom. Give to all living in these lands the blessings of well-being and harmony, but above all things give us faith in you, that our nation may bring glory to your name and blessings to all peoples, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

## FIRST READING: Zechariah 9:9-12

A reading from Zechariah.

*The coming messianic king will inaugurate an era of disarmament and prosperity. Because of God's covenant with Israel, the people are designated as "prisoners of hope."*

<sup>9</sup> Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion!  
Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem!  
See, your king comes to you;  
triumphant and victorious is he,  
humble and riding on a donkey,  
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

<sup>10</sup> He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim  
and the war horse from Jerusalem;  
and the battle bow shall be cut off,  
and he shall command peace to the nations;  
his dominion shall be from sea to sea  
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

<sup>11</sup> As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you,  
I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.

<sup>12</sup> Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope;  
today I declare that I will restore to you double.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **PSALM: Psalm 145:8-14**

**(read responsively between lector and congregation, beginning with the lector)**

<sup>8</sup> The LORD is gracious and full <sup>|</sup> of compassion,  
slow to anger and abounding in <sup>|</sup> steadfast love.

<sup>9</sup> **LORD, you are <sup>|</sup> good to all,  
and your compassion is over <sup>|</sup> all your works.**

<sup>10</sup> All your works shall praise <sup>|</sup> you, O LORD,  
and your faithful <sup>|</sup> ones shall bless you.

<sup>11</sup> **They shall tell of the glory <sup>|</sup> of your kingdom  
and speak <sup>|</sup> of your power,**

<sup>12</sup> that all people may know <sup>|</sup> of your power  
and the glorious splendor <sup>|</sup> of your kingdom.

<sup>13</sup> **Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; your dominion endures through- <sup>|</sup> out  
all ages.**

**You, LORD, are faithful in all your words, and loving in <sup>|</sup> all your works.**

<sup>14</sup> The Lord upholds all <sup>|</sup> those who fall  
and lifts up those who <sup>|</sup> are bowed down.

### **SECOND READING: Romans 7:15-25a**

A reading from Romans.

*Life captive to sin is a catch-22 existence in which we know good but do not do it and do things we know to be wrong. Through Jesus Christ, God has set us free from such a futile existence.*

<sup>15</sup> I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. <sup>16</sup> Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. <sup>17</sup> But in fact it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells within me. <sup>18</sup> For I know that the good does not dwell

within me, that is, in my flesh. For the desire to do the good lies close at hand, but not the ability. <sup>19</sup> For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. <sup>20</sup> Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells within me.

<sup>21</sup> So I find it to be a law that, when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand.

<sup>22</sup> For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, <sup>23</sup> but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. <sup>24</sup> Wretched person that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?

<sup>25a</sup> Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

**\*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ELW p. 102)**

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,  
al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.  
*Repeat alleluia*  
Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e - ter - nal life.

**\*GOSPEL: Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30**

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*Jesus chides people who find fault with both his ministry and that of John the Baptist. He thanks God that wisdom and intelligence are not needed to receive what God has to offer.*

[Jesus spoke to the crowd saying:] <sup>16</sup> “To what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another,

<sup>17</sup> ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.’

<sup>18</sup> “For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon’; <sup>19</sup> the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.”

<sup>20</sup> Then he began to reproach the cities in which most of his deeds of power had been done because they did not repent. <sup>21</sup> “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have

repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. <sup>22</sup> But I tell you, on the day of judgment it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for you. <sup>23</sup> And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven?

No, you will be brought down to Hades.

“For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. <sup>24</sup> But I tell you that on the day of judgment it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom than for you.”

<sup>25</sup> At that time Jesus said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; <sup>26</sup> yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. <sup>27</sup> All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

<sup>28</sup> “Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

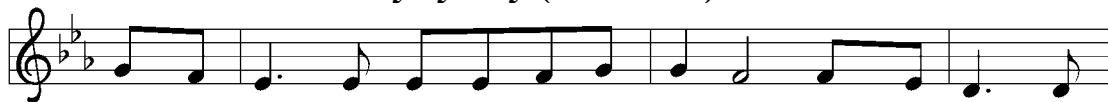
The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**SERMON** Rev. Julia Brown

\*Please stand as you are able for the final verse.

## HYMN OF THE DAY *Day by Day* (ELW 790)



1 Day by day, your mer-cies, Lord, at - tend me, bring - ing com - fort  
2 Day by day, I know you will pro - vide me strength to serve and  
3 Oh, what joy to know that you are near me when my bur - dens



to my anx-ious soul. Day by day, the bless-ings, Lord, you send me  
wis - dom to o - bey; I will seek your lov - ing will to guide me  
grow too great to bear; oh, what joy to know that you will hear me



draw me near - er to my heav'n-ly goal. Love di - vine, be-yond all  
o'er the paths I strug-gle day by day. I will fear no e - vil  
when I come, O Lord, to you in prayer. Day by day, no mat - ter



mor - tal mea - sure, brings to naught the bur-dens of my quest; Sav-ior,  
of the mor - row, I will trust in your en - dur-ing grace. Sav-ior,  
what be - tide me, you will hold me ev - er in your hand. Sav-ior,



lead me to the home I trea-sure, where at last I'll find e - ter - nal rest.  
help me bear life's pain and sor-row till in glo - ry I be-hold your face.  
with your pres-ence here to guide me, I will reach at last the prom-ised land.

Text: Carolina Sandell Berg, 1832–1903; tr. Robert Leaf, 1936–2005

Music: BLOTT EN DAG, Oskar Ahnfelt, 1813–1882

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Please join me as we confirm our faith together in the words of the Apostles' Creed.

### \*CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,**

suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.\*  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

**\*PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH** (Please respond.)

P: God of grace, C: hear our prayer.

**\*PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.  
And also with you.

**\*OFFERTORY** *We Give Thee but Thine Own* (ELW 686)



1 We give thee but thine own, what - e'er the gift may be;  
2 May we thy boun - ties thus as stew - ards true re - ceive,



all that we have is thine a - lone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.  
and glad - ly, as thou bless - est us, to thee our first - fruits give.

Text: William W. How, 1823–1897, alt.

Music: HEATH, L. Mason and G. Webb, *Cantica Lauda*, 1850

## **\*OFFERING PRAYER**

Blessed are you, O God,  
for waves of grain and harvesters,  
fruitful vines and winepresses,  
for our labor and our rest,  
for the gifts of your hand in this land.  
Transform us and what we offer  
into the banquet of your compassion,  
serving your love without limits  
through Jesus Christ, our Savior.  
**Amen.**

## **\*THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

Holy God,  
you alone are Majesty,  
you alone are Excellency,  
you alone are Sovereign.

Within the vast reaches you splashed into being,  
you formed our star and this planet:  
purple mountains, fruited plains,  
crystal waters, towering forests, gleaming mines.  
Here you fashioned human beings  
in our infinite variety and hue,  
yet each one created equal,  
to care for one another  
and our earthly home.

In a time of peace  
enforced by the cruelty of empire,  
you came in Jesus to share our life.  
Born under the rule of a merciless king,  
Jesus revealed the merciful realm of God.  
Moving across borders  
to people broken and oppressed,  
Jesus brought healing, restoration, and freedom.

In the night in which he was betrayed,  
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;  
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it for all to drink, saying:  
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,  
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore,  
Christ's execution at the hands of a ruthless regime,  
Christ's resurrection that buries death,  
Christ's ascension to rule with love forever,  
we declare the revolutionary mystery of faith:  
**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

God, shed your grace on us.  
Shower your Holy Spirit  
on these gifts of bread and wine  
and on your people gathered this day.  
Ignite in us the flame of freedom—

freedom from prejudice, from supremacy, from fear;  
freedom for acceptance, for welcome,  
for the *shalom* that you have first shown to us.

Faithful God, loving God:  
Your Majesty shines forth in weakness.  
Your Excellency is revealed to infants.  
Your Sovereignty reigns from a cross.  
Yours, O God,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
is the everlasting kingdom,  
the peaceable power,  
and the humble glory,  
now and forever.  
**Amen.**

## **\*LORD'S PRAYER**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.**

## **\*INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Citizens of the commonwealth of heaven:  
Taste and know that God is good to all.

## **COMMUNION**

*Continuous - Please continue down center aisle at the direction of the usher. After you receive the bread, you may take a cup of red wine or white grape juice from the tray. Please place your empty communion cup in the basket. Gluten free wafers are available, ask the Pastor when you come forward. Notify the Head Usher if you would appreciate receiving Communion at your seat rather than walking up to the altar, the Pastor and Communion Assistant will be happy to bring Communion to you.*

## COMMUNION SONG *Come to the Table* (ELW 481)



Come to the ta - ble of mer - cy, pre - pared with the wine and the bread.



All who are hun - gry and thirst - y, come, and your souls will be fed.



Come at the Lord's in - vi - ta - tion; re - ceive from his nail - scarred hand.



Eat of the bread of sal - va - tion; drink of the blood of the Lamb.

Text: Claire Cloninger, b. 1942

Music: COME TO THE TABLE, Martin J. Nystrom, b. 1956

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## COMMUNION HYMN *O Beautiful for Spacious Skies* (ELW 888)



1 O beau - ti - ful for spa - cious skies, for am - ber waves of grain,  
2 O beau - ti - ful for he - roes proved in lib - er - at - ing strife,  
3 O beau - ti - ful for pa - triot dream that sees be - yond the years



for pur - ple moun - tain maj - es - ties a - bove the fruit - ed plain:  
who more than self their coun - try loved, and mer - cy more than life:  
thine al - a - bas - ter cit - ies gleam, un - dimmed by hu - man tears:



A - mer - i - ca! A - mer - i - ca! God shed his grace on thee,  
A - mer - i - ca! A - mer - i - ca! May God thy gold re - fine,  
A - mer - i - ca! A - mer - i - ca! God mend thine ev - 'ry flaw,



and crown thy good with broth - er - hood from sea to shin - ing sea.  
till all suc - cess be no - ble - ness, and ev - 'ry gain di - vine.  
con - firm thy soul in self - con - trol, thy lib - er - ty in law.

Text: Katherine L. Bates, 1859-1929

Music: MATERNA, Samuel A. Ward, 1848-1903

## **\*COMMUNION BLESSING**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.  
Amen.

## **\*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

We thank you, God of heaven and earth,  
that you fill our deepest need  
with the very gift of Jesus Christ,  
broken and poured out for us.  
Pour us out into a broken world.  
Channel our common life  
toward the common good,  
following the way our Savior leads us  
now and forever.  
**Amen.**

## **\*AFFIRMATION OF CHRISTIAN VOCATION IN CIVIC LIFE**

People of God, you are chosen and named as God's beloved.  
You have received the gift of Christian vocation,  
a holy calling lived out in various dimensions of your life,  
your relationships and communities,  
your work and your rest.  
Daily and richly we live in the promises of holy baptism,  
sustained by grace to trust God,  
proclaim Christ through word and deed,  
care for others and the world God made,  
and work for justice and peace.

I ask you, therefore:

Will you endeavor to pattern your life on Jesus Christ,  
in gratitude to God and in service to others?

*Response:* **I will, and I ask God to help me.**

Will you strive to pursue the common good in public life,  
nurturing mutual care among neighbors near and far?

*Response:* **I will, and I ask God to help me.**

Will you pledge to bear witness in word and action,  
commending what is true and right,  
renouncing what is unjust and harmful,  
and working to mend what is flawed?

*Response:* **I will, and I ask God to help me.**

*The presiding minister continues.*

Sovereign God, your Son Jesus lived within the structures of society even as he spoke truth to those in power and challenged systems of oppression. Give to your servant/s courage, patience, and vision in their commitment to serve in Christ's name. Empower us all in our Christian vocation to be courageous disciples and responsible citizens. Grant that our life in the public realm be grounded in love for our neighbors, care for the most vulnerable, and respect for the common life we share, through Jesus Christ our Savior.

**Amen.**

**\*BLESSING**

The Author of life,  
the Word of salvation,  
the Breath of new birth,  
✠ one God, bless you  
and equip you for living and serving,  
today and every day.

**Amen.**

**\*SENDING SONG** *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: Battle Hymn of the Republic* (ELW 890)



1 Mine eyes have seen the glo - ry of the com - ing of the Lord;  
2 He has sound - ed forth the trum - pet that shall nev - er call re - treat;  
3 In the beau - ty of the lil - ies Christ was born a - cross the sea,



he is tram - pling out the vin - tage where the grapes of wrath are stored;  
he is sift - ing out the hearts of men be - fore his judg - ment seat.  
with a glo - ry in his bos - om that trans - fig - ures you and me.



he has loosed the fate - ful light - ning of his ter - ri - ble swift sword:  
Oh, be swift, my soul, to an - swer him; be ju - bi - lant, my feet!  
As he died to make men ho - ly, let us live to make men free,



his truth is march - ing on.  
Our God is march - ing on.  
while God is march - ing on.

*Refrain*



Glo - ry, glo - ry! Hal - le - lu - jah! Glo - ry, glo - ry! Hal - le - lu - jah!



Glo - ry, glo - ry! Hal - le - lu - jah! His truth is march - ing on.

Text: Julia Ward Howe, 1819–1910

Music: BATTLE HYMN, North American, 19th cent

**\*DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Seek liberty and justice for all.

**Thanks be to God.**

**EXTINGUISHING OF THE CANDLES/SILENT PRAYER**

**POSTLUDE** *America the Beautiful* - arr. Edwain T. Childs

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## SERVING TODAY

Interim Pastor .....	Rev. Julia Brown
Church Office Email Address .....	<a href="mailto:office@solomonslutheran.org">office@solomonslutheran.org</a>
Organist .....	Mary-Jo Bedsworth
Head Usher .....	Becky Pecha
Acolyte .....	Wayne Dale
Lector.....	Wayne Dale
Securing Offering.....	Janice McEntire & Tana Vance
Communion Set-Up.....	Marjorie Dale
Communion Clean-Up .....	Marjorie Dale
Communion Bread .....	Marjorie Dale
Communion Assist.....	Martie Veilleux
Coffee Fellowship .....	Tana Vance & Marjorie Dale
Attendance last Sunday.....	33

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**The altar flowers** this morning are placed to the glory of God in proud honor of our grandchildren, S. Sgt. Clark Piper and S. Sgt. Stephanie Piper who are serving our country in the Air Force given by Wayne and Marjorie Dale.

**Welcome Visitors!** We welcome you to our worship service. We hope your visit with us will be a time of blessing. If you have any concerns, please talk to the Head Usher. We invite you to worship with us again!

**Any pastoral care or concerns can be addressed to Pastor Julia Brown** by email to [pastor@solomonslutheran.org](mailto:pastor@solomonslutheran.org) or phone 703-434-9220.

**Prayer requests for the following:** *Matt Pecha, Marie Dovey, Amy Eichelberger, Paul Steiding, Clif Rau, Dennis Hose, Sam Brooks, Kaitlyn Dovey, Patsy Wildeson, James Bersch, Kristen Hardman, Charles Carl, Debbie Aschmann, Donna, Karen, Linda Mumaugh, Katy Klutz, Becky Ensinger, all the Homebound, and our world & country. If anyone has a prayer request, please call Janice McEntire, 717-264-3702.*

**Please Be Aware:** *We wish to be a praying congregation, and especially for those who are sick or experiencing difficult times. We will continue to name person's (first name only) aloud each Sunday, and we will hold each name for a month. In order to keep our list updated we ask that by the final Thursday of the month, but please call Janice McEntire 717 264-3702 to keep the name on for an extra month. Any name can remain for as long as desired, but we need to hear from the person adding the name, or we will presume the name can be removed. Thank you for your understanding.*

## **Weekly Calendar Reminders:**

July 8 - Bible Study 10am

9 - Finance Noon

**Bible Study - Wednesdays at 10:00 AM in the fellowship center conference room.**

**Good News Camp is still in need of the following supplies:** pencils, paper towels, crayons/coloring pencils, Lysol wipes, toilet brushes, 13/40 gallon trash bags, Lysol disinfectant spray, Graham crackers, cases of water. **Christian Ed will deliver the items.**

**During the months of June, July, and August, Social Ministry will be collecting items for personal care kits for Lutheran World Relief.** Kits will be assembled on Rally Day, September 13<sup>th</sup>. Display of items needed will be in the sanctuary. Anyone wishing to give a monetary donation can make a check payable to Solomon's Lutheran Church and mark personal care kits on memo line.

**You are invited to attend a fellowship lunch with Solomon's UCC every month on the fourth Thursday at 12:00 PM.** July's luncheon will be on July 23. Please RSVP to Marvin Shew at [marv\\_joyce@yahoo.com](mailto:marv_joyce@yahoo.com) so that he can update you when a restaurant is chosen.

**If you are not taking your altar flowers home,** please let Kathy Bowen know to whom or to where you would like them donated. Thanks.

**The 2026 sign-up charts for Acolyte, Lector etc. are on the table in the Sunday School room.** Please sign up for as many as you can.

**The 2026 Chart for Altar flowers is on the table in the Sunday School room.** The cost of the two vases will be \$60.00 per week. You will continue to provide Kimberly with the information for the bulletin prior to the week before the Sunday you choose. Include the cost of \$60.00 with the bulletin information.

## **Notes about our service this morning:**

On July 4, 2026, the United States celebrated the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Included below is some background that led to this day. On June 11, 1776, the "Committee of Five," comprised of Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Robert Sherman, and Robert Livingston were given the task by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Continental Congress of drafting a document declaring the colonies' independence from Great Britain. Thomas Jefferson was the primary author of this document. On June 28<sup>th</sup>, the draft of the Declaration was submitted to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Continental Congress. Many edits were debated and changes made before the Declaration was approved. It wasn't until July 2, 1776, that Congress voted in favor of declaring independence from Great Britain. Then on July 4, the final text of the Declaration was approved and adopted. It was not officially signed until August 2, 1776, although it had been made public on July 5. The approval by Congress of the Declaration of Independence is what we celebrate...it's what we acknowledge this weekend.

There has been much debate as to what the church should do or not do to recognize this day. The ELCA developed a service to observe this historical anniversary on or around July 4, not to worship our country, not to say our country has no flaws, but rather to give thanks to God for the blessings he has bestowed on our country in the past 250 years. This is a service of thanksgiving in observance of this important date in our history. The scripture readings are those designated for the 6th Sunday after Pentecost. The liturgy and worship texts are designed to commemorate this day. We as citizens give thanks to God for all his blessings on us as a nation. We ask his continued blessings as our nation strives to help those in need in our country, strives to provide aid where needed in our world, and works with other countries to bring peace to our country and the world. (information gathered from google.com)

### **Hymn Notes**

Our gathering hymn this morning, “Before You Lord, We Bow,” was written by Francis Scott Key in 1832. He wrote the text as a special prayerful tribute for an Independence Day celebration to honor God while praying for our nation. Key was a devoutly religious man who actually considered becoming an Episcopal minister. He wrote this hymn to ensure the Fourth of July was a day of spiritual reflection rather than just secular pride. Today this hymn is a staple in many hymnals across the United States as both a national and sacred piece of music.

Our sending hymn this morning, “Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory,” was written by Julia Ward Howe in November 1861. The tune itself predates the Civil War. During November 1861, Howe visited a Union Army camp near Washington, DC and heard the troops singing a song using the melody we know and sing today. Deeply moved by the tune, Howe was awakened during the night and in a semi-conscious state, mentally composed new verses and hurriedly wrote them down. She sold her poem to the *Atlantic Monthly*, and it was published in February 1862. It was an immediate success...and for this, Howe was paid \$4. The song was sung for President Lincoln, and it soon became the unofficial anthem of the Union Army. Following the Civil War, the song became a deeply ingrained staple of American culture. (Wikipedia.com)